

# Death Valley

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Death Valley National Park

## School Visits on Your Own

Death Valley National Park is an exciting outdoor laboratory for studying the Mojave Desert's natural environment. As it is not always possible to schedule ranger-assisted programs, this brochure is intended to help teachers and other group leaders plan their own guided trips.



### Planning Ahead



Students will learn more and better enjoy their visit to Death Valley National Park if they take part in preparatory activities. Check the **Curriculum Materials** section on our webpage, [www.nps.gov/deva/forteachers](http://www.nps.gov/deva/forteachers). This will help provide easy-to-use background materials and suggested activities.

If you have not been to the park recently, consider making a planning trip. First-hand knowledge of the trail you will walk, or the tour you plan to take, will make your visit more valuable and relaxing.

### Comfort & Safety



Groups are encouraged to bring one chaperone for every ten students. Because some visitor areas can become very crowded, it is easier for students and leaders if they are divided into groups of fifteen or less when walking the trails.

All participants will be safer and more comfortable if they wear long pants, close-toed shoes, and socks. Hats, sunscreen, and water bottles are also essential to the health and safety of your students.

Food Services are limited. Several restaurants and a general store are located in the Furnace Creek area, but can become pricey for a large group. Bagged lunches and beverages are recommended and there are plenty of places to picnic with your students. After eating, please have students check areas carefully for food scraps and litter. Place all trash in marked receptacles.

Restrooms are located throughout the park, with the largest being at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center. Most others are only 1-2 stalls.

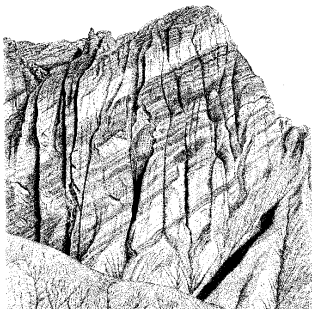
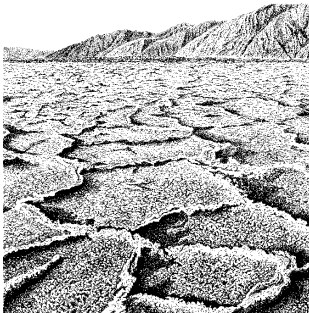
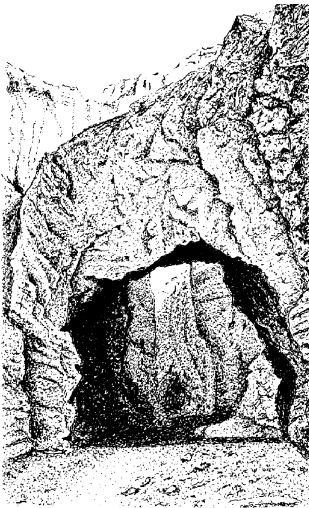
### Protecting the Park



Review the rules and safety precautions so students and chaperones will know what is expected of them:

- **Respect the Wildlife.** Loud noises are discouraged. Throwing objects at, feeding, or other harassment of park animals is strictly prohibited.
- **Respect the Home and Food Sources of the Wildlife.** Please leave all plants, rocks, or other natural and historical objects in the park. Place litter where it belongs.
- **Respect the Rights of Others to Enjoy Their National Park.** Loud noises and other disruptive behavior on the trails can spoil the experience for other visitors. Buses and other loud vehicles are asked to turn off their engines when parked at trailheads.
- **Respect each Other.** Running, pushing, or yelling are not allowed on the trails. Stay with your class; always have adults lead and bring up the end of the line.

## Places to Visit with Your Group



### Salt Creek

**Length:** ½ mile round trip

Tiny little fish live here. If you visit in the springtime you might see hundreds of pupfish, named because they chase each other around like puppies playing!

Remember to **stay on the boardwalk** so you don't hurt the little guys. 1 mile graded gravel road to trail head

### Badwater Salt Flats

**Length :** as long or as short as you'd like

Visit the lowest place in North America! Walk out onto the salt flats where you'll be 282 feet below sea level (no breath holding required!) This is a wonderful place to explore what was once a large freshwater lake and to see the faulting activity of the region.

### Mosaic Canyon

**Length:** ½ to 2 miles, one way

This is a kid-sized canyon! You don't have to walk very far before you get into the narrow section. You and your students will have to walk in a line just to squeeze through it. The smooth rock walls were carved by flash floods, so don't go in if it is raining on the mountain above. 2 miles on graded gravel road to trailhead

### Golden Canyon

**Length:** 1 mile, one way

If you like to explore, you'll like Golden Canyon. This canyon has lots of little side canyons just waiting for you to see what's up them. Interpretive trail guides are available.

### Sand Dunes

**Length:** 2 miles to highest dune

It's fun to play on the sand dunes by Stovepipe Wells. Run up a dune and roll down the other side. Dig a hole in the sand and see if it's damp inside. Watch for tracks of wildlife and try to figure out what kind of animals made them. Be careful, the mesquite trees on the edge of the dune field have big thorns and the sand can get hot.

### Natural Bridge

**Length:** ½ mile to natural bridge  
1 mile to end of canyon, one way

Easy, uphill walk through a narrow canyon. Half-way through you'll walk under a natural bridge that was formed by flood waters! ½ a mile further will take you to a dry waterfall. 1.5 miles on graded gravel road to trailhead.

### Scotty's Castle

Prospector "Death Valley Scotty" claimed this Spanish-style mansion was built by gold from his gold mine. In reality it was the vacation home of his wealthy friends in the 1920's. Living history tours are given by costumed park rangers. Contact the Castle at 760-786-2392 for scheduling and information.

### Furnace Creek Visitor Center

Information, exhibits, and sale items can be found at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center. Always supervise students in sales areas.

For maps and additional information, visit our website at [www.nps.gov/deva](http://www.nps.gov/deva)

## After Your Visit



Don't let the wonder of Death Valley end with your field trip! In the classroom, be sure to review the adventures your students had in the park.

Many of the concepts to be learned in Death Valley can be incorporated in other aspects of education. Do art projects, math problems, active games, or other activities to reinforce lessons the students learned on their field trip.

We hope you find your trip to Death Valley to be both enjoyable and worthwhile. Come back again!